

D# 11 LIVE-WORK UNITS

General Description

Live-Work units would be a new mixed-use building form in Renton and an addition to the zoning use table. A live-work unit is generally defined as a unit where residential and non-residential spaces are combined where the proprietor can both live and work. Live-work units provide a number of benefits to the community including incubator space for small business growth, reduction in commuting and vehicle miles traveled, and added services for a neighborhood. The non-residential space would need to meet commercial building standards to fulfill the 'work' element. This proposal would allow live-work units in the Commercial Neighborhood (CN) and Residential-14 (R-14) Zones. Such projects would be reviewed as a conditional use, rather than allowed outright, so certain standards could be set such as creating a street presence to encourage pedestrian oriented activity.

Impact Analysis

Effect on rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan

The proposal's effect on the rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan is not expected to change. Live-work units would provide an added structure form for commercial uses in the R-14 zone and an additional form of development in the lower intensity commercial zone. One condition for the R-14 zone is that only properties next to a higher street classification (principal, minor, and collector arterial) could build live-work units to limit potential negative impacts of growth and development in primarily residential areas.

Effect on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities

There are no expected impacts on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities. The requirement that non-residential space be built to commercial building standards may require more capacity from public facilities as lower intensity commercial uses (such as retail, on-site services, etc.) become established over time.

Effect on the rate of population and employment growth

The proposal should not create a significant impact on either population or employment growth. Employment growth could see a benefit by providing an added building form for small businesses to start or grow.

Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable

Comprehensive Plan objectives and policies encourage a mix of uses such as dwelling units in commercial zones and a variety of commercial uses in some residential zones. Specifically in the Plan's Housing Element, there are policies and objectives that speak to innovative dwelling types, a range of residential styles that should be provided, and mixed-use projects where residential and non-residential uses are combined. Live-work units are an example of these policies.

Plan objectives for the CN and R-14 zones also remain valid and desirable with this proposal. For example, the Commercial Neighborhood land use designation encourages a mix of limited residential with smaller scale commercial uses that provide goods and services to the

surrounding community. Within the R-14 zone, policies promote commercial uses, not throughout the entirety of the zone, but in certain areas where such activities could work. Live-work units would provide smaller scale commercial uses such as on-site services and smaller retail spaces. In the R-14 zone, the units would be limited to those properties along an arterial.

The following are related policies in the Comprehensive Plan to the residential, commercial and mixed-use elements that live-work units would provide in the CN and R-14 zone:

- Housing Element
 - *Policy H-25* (Moderate and Middle Income Housing): Ensure that a sufficient amount of land in all multi-family and mixed-use areas of the City is zoned to allow attached housing and innovative housing types.
 - *Policy H-60* (Housing in Mixed-Use Areas): Encourage a range of housing types in the Urban Center and those commercial designations allowing mixed-use.
- Land Use Element, Residential Policies
 - *Policy LU-140*: Pursue multiple strategies for residential growth including... mixed-use projects and multi-family development in Commercial and Center land use designations.
 - *Policy LU-142*: Encourage a citywide mix of housing types including... Residential/commercial mixed-use development.
- Land Use Element, Residential Medium Density Land Use Designation
 - *Policy LU-169*: Residential developments should include public amenities that function as a gathering place within the development and should include features such as a public square, open space, park, civic or commercial uses in the R-14 zone. The central place should include amenities for passive recreation such as benches and fountains and be unified by a design motif or common theme.
 - *Policy LU-172*: Mixed-use development in the form of civic, commercial development or other non-residential structures may be allowed in the central places of Residential Medium Density development projects within the R-14 zone, subject to compliance with criteria established through development regulations.
- Land Use Element, Commercial Neighborhood Land Use Designation
 - *Objective LU-DDD*: Commercial Neighborhood designated areas are intended to reduce traffic volumes, permit small-scale business uses, such as commercial/retail, professional office, and services that serve the personal needs of the immediate population in surrounding neighborhoods.
 - *Policy LU-285*: A mix of uses (e.g. convenience retail, consumer services, offices, residential) should be encouraged in small-scale commercial developments.

Effect on general land values or housing costs

Land values where live-work units would be allowed are not expected to change. In the CN zone, mixed-use projects are currently allowed. In the R-14 zone, a variety of commercial uses such as eating and drinking establishments, on-site services, and retail can already be permitted with conditions. Live-work units would only become an added building type for these same uses already allowed in the zones.

Whether capital improvements or expenditures are being made or completed as expected
No specific capital improvements or expenditures are associated with this proposal.

Consistency with GMA, the Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies

This proposal is consistent with the GMA, Comprehensive Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies. Providing the live-work unit option in the CN and R-14 zones is consistent with policies of having a mix of uses and mixed-use structures spread throughout urban areas where people can both live and work and where services can be provided in closer distance to surrounding neighborhoods.

Effect on critical areas and natural resource lands

There is no foreseen effect on critical areas and natural resource lands. If there are such impacts with a live-work use, an environmental evaluation would be part of a project's review.

Effect on other considerations

None.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that live-work units become a new use allowed in the CN and R-14 zones with the following standards:

- Non-residential spaces in the units must meet commercial building standards so the space can be used for small scale business activity over the long term and fulfill the purpose of live-work, where a service is provided.
- Live-work units should not be a permitted use outright, but should instead be processed through an Administrative Conditional Use Permit so conditions can be established based on local circumstances.
- For the R-14 zone, live-work units should only be allowed along arterials (principal, minor, and collector) rather than allowed throughout the residential zone. This arterial criteria would limit the areas where a small business could receive clients and deliveries without negatively impacting residences.
- A design standard should be required where the non-residential/business space should create a pedestrian oriented area.
- Parking requirements for live-work units should at minimum require one parking space specifically for the residential space. For units 2,500 square feet or less, this one space would be the requirement for the whole unit. For units greater than 2,500 square feet, required parking would be based on the parking standards for the non-residential use or the closest similar use as determined by the Administrator.

Implementation Requirements

Sections in the Development Regulations (Title IV) of the Renton Municipal Code would need to be changed including: creating a definition for live-work unit, adding live-work unit to the zoning use table, and establishing requirements that live-work units only be allowed adjacent to arterials in the R-14, and that the business/non-residential spaces are pedestrian oriented along the street and sidewalk.